

April 22, 2005

Dear Friend:

This week, as Americans watch gas prices climb steadily and we commemorate Earth Day, the House debated the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Unfortunately, the bill that passed will do nothing to help lower gas prices. Instead, this flawed, shortsighted energy bill does not give us a national energy policy and provides more than \$8 billion in taxpayer dollars to the private industry. This bill does not reflect our present or future energy needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

One of my greatest concerns about this bill is the provision that allows drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). I have been to Alaska and I've seen the tremendously diverse wildlife that will be hurt if drilling occurs in the area. There are native tribes who depend on this wildlife, and they have asked Congress and the state of Alaska to stand up for them and oppose drilling. The environmental costs of this provision are sky-high, and the benefits are little to none—six month's supply of oil. Opening ANWR would have no effect on our dependence on foreign oil. It is simply not worth it.

It is difficult to argue that this energy bill is "comprehensive" when it does nothing to address fuel efficiency in our vehicles. As soon as 2008, China could produce cars and trucks that are more energy-efficient than the U.S. fleet. We must pass fuel efficiency standards not only for the sake of our environment, but also to stay competitive in the world. Raising fuel economy standards would reap SUV, pickup truck, and minivan owners a net savings of up to two thousand dollars in some cases. It would also alleviate the need for the U.S. to send over \$285 million abroad each hour to pay for foreign oil. Including fuel efficiency standards would have truly benefited our national security, our economy, and consumers.

I offered an amendment on the House floor to strike a \$30 million giveaway to uranium mining companies. The dangerous uranium mining technology that will be funded by this bill, called in-situ leach mining, could seriously harm the water and health of 12,000 Navajo Indians. If companies who wish to mine uranium in New Mexico succeed, the proposed mining would leach uranium from an aquifer that is the sole source of drinking water for thousands of people in northwestern New Mexico, thereby threatening their health and the integrity of their communities. In addition, I do not believe we need to be funneling \$30 million to uranium companies in a time of skyrocketing federal deficits. Unfortunately my amendment was defeated by a vote of 225-204.

In order for an energy bill to be truly comprehensive and forward-thinking, it must encourage and require production of renewable energy. I was not allowed to bring to the House floor an amendment creating a federal Renewable Portfolio Standard, so that by the year 2022 electric utilities (excluding rural electric cooperatives) would generate 15% of their energy from renewable energy sources, and 20% by the year 2027. Right now, the U.S. relies on foreign oil to meet roughly 60 percent of our oil needs. This inevitably leaves us dependent on unfriendly nations and harms our national security. We consume a quarter of the world's oil, yet we only control two percent of its supply. It is high time we invest in renewable energy technologies and develop practical solutions to encourage renewable energy production.

We need a comprehensive energy policy that encourages safe domestic energy production, that will not drastically harm the environment and cause potential harm to thousands, and that does not contain billions of dollars in giveaways to big oil and gas companies. We need a real energy strategy that will help consumers, decrease our dangerous dependence on foreign oil, and keep us competitive internationally. I hope we can work toward a more comprehensive energy bill in the future. For more information on this legislation please [click here](#).

Very truly yours,

Tom Udall  
Member of Congress